TICKLED TO DEATH: A Suggestion to Count and Countess Bentinck



By Christopher Morley

CHARACTERS

COUNTESS BENTINCK. COUNT BENTINCK. THE EX-KAISER.

KARL ROSNER. THE DOCTOR.

THE UNDERTAKER. CENE-The Kaiser's bedroom at Amerongen. A comfortable room with a four-poster bed, dressing table and ters the room.) cheval glass, chairs and a writing table bearing a typewriter and a mass of manuscript papers. By the bed is a small medicine table, with bottles and glasses, drawers, etc.) particularly one large bottle labelled

the Kaiser in full uniform. A volume of Shakespeare in one of the chairs. When the scene opens Countess Bentinck is discovered making the Kaiser's bed. There are several pillows, which she con-

POISON. On the bureau is a large photo of

templates with surprise. many pillows? To prevent a rush of brains

to the head, I suppose. (A revolver drops out from under the pillows as she makes the bed. She picks it

Ah, that's what he needs-a rush of bullets to the head! (Puts revolver on medicine table. Picks

up the bottle marked POISON and holds it to the light to see if any of the contents have been taken.) Didn't take a drop! (Pours out some of the liquid into a tum-

bler and places it on table by typewriter. Returning to the bed she finds four hotwater bottles at the foot, inside the blan-Heavens! You might think he was a cent-

(Enter Bentinck, a genial looking person

with side whiskers, both on his face and in his mind. He has a puzzled and depressed demeanor and carries a coil of BENTINCK-Any luck?

COUNTESS-Not a bit. He didn't touch

BENTINCK-Never mind. Persistence always wins. I've brought him another little hint. (Shows a very suggestive noose in the end of rope and lays it on the bed in

BENTINCK-(Jocularly)-Of course, this



COUNTESS-He may be a nuisance, but he's got too much sense to fall for that. BENTINCK-We'll put a note with it. (Takes piece of paper from table and writes on it): "Where there's a will there's always a way." COUNTESS-Well, I never thought we'd

come to this. I have to do the room myself now. The last of the chambermaids gave me notice this morning. He insisted on giving them autographed photos.

campaign will have an effect. I'm having them up all over the house. COUNTESS-Where is he now?

BENTINCK-Out chopping wood. Queer what a passion he has for that woodpile. COUNTESS-I don't wonder. If I were in his shoes I'd want to touch wood, too.

here with the morning symptoms. COUNTESS-What rot that is. There's nothing the matter with Bill except cold

BENTINCK-And varicose vanity-COUNTESS-That's not fatal. You know

what his game is, don't you? BENTINCK-We are, I guess.

COUNTESS-He wants every one to believe he's so terribly ill that the League of

Nations won't think it worth while to ex-

doctor, anyway. I begged him to prescribe a little carbolic acid for him, but he says it wouldn't be professional. COUNTESS. That's the worst of doctors.

They lose their heads in an emergency like

BENTINCK-I wish Bill would do the

COUNTESS Well, look here, how much

longer is this thing going on? The butcher just called me up to say he won't deliver any more meat as long as Mr. Hohenzollern is here. First thing you know the League of Nations will have us up for conspiracy. BENTINCK-If only I could get that doctor to do his bit-

COUNTESS - To do his obit, you

BENTINCK-Honestly, I don't know what to do. Bill seems to be settling down for an indefinite stay. I had a man posted out in the park with a fowling piece to pick him off, but now he goes everywhere in that baby tank Frau Krupp sent him. It's almost teapessible to pink him.

COUNTESS-I tell you what the trouble is. You're been a bit too obvious.

BENTINCK-Well, yesterday I sneaked up here while he was shaving and suddenly shouted Boo! at him. I thought it would frighten him and he would cut his

COUNTESS-Nonsense! All this poison, rope and razor stuff is poor technique. Death ought to be presented to him in its more amiable and persuasive aspects.

BENTINCK-I guess you're right. And there's another side to it. He'll never do anything rash until he has a uniform to wear. He doesn't want to be buried in COUNTESS-He never did anything rash

or anything rational either-BENTINCK-You know, if we could get a nice uniform for him, I think he wouldn't

mind passing out. COUNTESS-You can't bully him into committing suicide. He needs coaxing --

COUNTESS-Don't strain yourself-BENTINCK - Look out, he's coming. Bring your foot-warmers along and I'll tell

(Exeunt. After a moment the door opens and the Kaiser and Karl Rosner appear. The Kaiser is in outing clothes, norfolk jacket and knickerbockers. He carries an axe. Rosner in ordinary civilian garb. The Kaiser stays by the door while Rosner en-

KAISER-Just have a look round, Rosner; make sure everything's all right. (Rosner looks under bed, in bureau

How about that cigar there? Any clockwork in it? (Points to cigar lying on

table.) ROSNER (holds eigar to his ear, listens) -I think everything is ganz gemütlich.

your majesty. KAISER-Just try the typewriter. Last week there was a wire attached to one of COUNTESS-Wonder why he uses so the keys. Every time I tried to make a capital I there was a hell of an explosion.

Very annoying, that's my favorite letter. I had to make all the I's in that chapter lower case. ROSNER (trying typewriter)-Jetzt ist die Zeit für alle gute Männer zur Hilfe des Kaisers zu kommen- I think it's all

(Holds up glass of poison.) KAISER (crosses to table, takes up glass, smells it, listens to it, and sets it down, shaking his head. He sits down in chair with a sigh of weariness)-Dear me, Rosner, this woodcutting is strenuous exercise. I'm a bit out of practice-

right. This is your medicine, wahrschein-

ROSNER-Ah! but no one can fell a tree the way you can, your majesty. I never saw anything like the way you brought down that last one-completely, root, branch and fruit!

KAISER-What do you mean? ROSNER-Why, your family tree.

KAISER-Come, come, we must get to work. (Points to pile of manuscript.) This will make some publisher's fortune, Rosner. I am going to dedicate it to Shakespeare, to return his compliment. ROSNER-To return his compliment,

your majesty? KAISER-Yes. Don't you remember? He dedicated his sonnets to me. (Picks up

volume of Shakespeare.) ROSNER-I had forgotten. KAISER-One of the most graceful things he ever did. (Turns over the pages)

-Here it is: "To the only begetter of these ensuing sonnets, Mr. W. H. All happiness." That is a great comfort to me. ROSNER-Come to think of it, your majesty, you have been quite a favorite with the English poets. Didn't Keats write an epitaph for you?

KAISER-An epitaph? What do you ROSNER-"Here lies one whose name

was writ in slaughter."

KAISER-You forget yourself! Come, I want to dictate some letters. (Rosner takes BENTINCK-Never mind, my dear; it down dictation.) To Herr Woodrow Wilson, can't last much longer. My psychological care the Murat Mansion, Paris. Dear Mr. Wilson, may I not tell you how happy I some little cards lettered saying "Death Is am to hear of the successful birth of the the Most Beautiful Adventure." We'll put | league of nations? I hope you are doing as well as can be expected. By some ov sight my invitation to the conference has not reached me. I have only just returned from an extended yachting trip, which lasted from July, 1914, until very recently, and have been quite out of touch with BENTINCK-By the way, the doctor's affairs. They tell me there has been a very unsuccessful war, which I am sorry to hear. You know how opposed I am to anything of that sort. Cannot something be done to prevent a recurrence of the trouble? I am thinking seriously of leaving Germany, in fact I have already left, and am visiting my old friend Graf Bentinck at Amerongen. It is a very jolly house party; we have had some shooting. Why don't you join us? About this war, I feel sure everything can be explained satisfactorily. Try to spend a Sunday here so as not to miss one of my sermons. I have had several very flattering offers to enter a higher life, but I feel sure that I can do more good as I am. I hear that a great many of your countrymen are visiting Germany. I am afraid my absence may have disappointed them. I must try to keep in touch with current events from now on. Cordially and sincerely yours-

> ROSNER Textually. But if your majesty will permit-may I suggest a change of

KAISER-What is it?

ROSNER-"I must try to keep in touch with current events"-pardon me for the suggestion, but it sounds too much like the electric chair-

KAISER-Gott! So it does. Well, fix it your own way. Now we will get at the autobiography. (Picks up MS.) I wish I had a uniform to wear while dictating. I could compose much better. I never feel at my best in these beastly civilians.

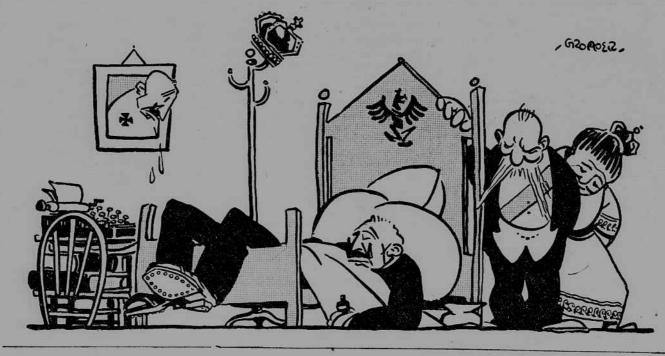
ROSNER-You should be on horseback,



KAISER-A good idea. Imagine I'm on horseback. (Stands on chair, makes motions as though riding a horse. Rosner rises and gives him ceremonious salute, which Kaiser returns gravely.) You know, Rosner, the only thing that bothers me about this autobiography is that I can't describe my own funeral. What a sight that will be! The mourning millions-poor old Bentinck's dignified grief-

ROSNER-If the arrangements could be made beforehand, majesty, you could leave me a memorandum of what you would like said. My humble hand would be more than

KAISER-Well, zum arbeit! Take this down: Before I left Germany in 1914 I told Bethmann-Hollweg to be sure to let me know if anything went wrong. In fact, BENTINCK-Yes. We coax and he my last instructions to him were to avoid creaks. Look here, I've got an idea ____ invading Belgium or France, not to go any-



where near Rheims Cathedral, and not to | have a chance to perform pretty soon their | looks at it, moves his neck uneasily.) "Terafter being absent more than four years I began to feel uneasy-

(Knocking at the door. The Kaiser leaps from chair and grabs revolver. Rosner vanishes under the bed.)

KAISER-Who's there? VOICE OUTSIDE-The doctor-

KAISER-Rosner, see who it isn't-(Rosner emerges, shamefaced, and goes

tremulously to door. The Kaiser covers the doorway with revolver. Enter doctor.) KAISER-Ah, doctor, all right! Don't be embarrassed-I thought it might be the pressure bad-Crown Prince. (Puts away revolver). DOCTOR (bows)-Very natural, The

heir doesn't agree with you? KAISER- Ha ha! Always in good humor, doctor! Rosner, I shan't need you for a while, (Rosner salutes and exits.)

DOCTOR-Well, how do you feel? KAISER-I suffer a great deal from the lack of saluting.

DOCTOR-You need a little tonic. Permit me. (Doctor rigidly salutes a number of times, the Kaiser eagerly returning it.) KAISER-Prachtvoll! Doctor, you always

DOCTOR-Ah, I'm afraid I'm not very good at that sort of thing. But you should care to correct the proofsee the guard of honor Graf Bentinck is drilling. Their salute is a thing of beauty. He has just been telling me about it. A

KAISER-What do you mean? What guard of honor?

DOCTOR-Why, for the funeral. KAISER (Surprised)-What funeral? DOCTOR-Graf Bentinck told me they

were expecting a funeral-KAISER-Teufelblitz! He never told me.

DOCTOR-The Graf is having his private cemetery renovated, he tells me. A new mausoleum has been installed, the most splendid thing of its kind. He says it will presses himself as much delighted at the make dying a pleasure.

KAISER-As a matter of fact. I never felt | more cheery topics. better-I didn't know Bentinck was a connoisseur in funerals. DOCTOR-Oh, very much so. He has taken

(Kaiser looks at himself in the mirror.)

it up as a hobby. He and I have collaborated a bit along that line. But I never saw him so keen as he is now.

KAISER-What an unpleasant hobby! DOCTOR-He has a very pretty taste for scenic effect. I don't know any man who can lay out a corpse to better advantage. You know he has had the chapel fitted up with footlights and limelights for lyings-

KAISER-He did say something about lying-in, but I thought he meant having

DOCTOR-If I were contemplating dying, I don't know where I would rather do it than here. The Graf has a set of embroidered shrouds that are really unique. (The Kaiser seems grewsomely fascinated

by this talk. He waves the doctor to a DOCTOR-Has Bentinck told you about

the local undertaker?

KAISER-No. Why should he? DOCTOR (With a shrug)-A positive touch. Poor fellow, his talent is almost | long as possible. wasted here in this out of the way place. He so rarely gets any material to work on that is worthy of his art. But he seems a bit more cheerful lately----KAISER-Gott!

let himself go, he does wonders. I think you are to be congratulated

KAISER-What do you mean? DOCTOR (feeling Kaiser's pulse)-Ah, well, I fear this is idle talk. Your pulse is admirable. A man of your physique might live for years. You mustn't be impatient. No chance of getting into uniform yet!

KAISER-Getting into uniform? DOCTOR-Didn't I tell you? The undertaker has a complete set of all the important uniforms. He uses them for clothing corpses at military funerals. A very remarkable fellow. He understands the dig- stable. A cortege fit for an emperor! It nity of death. I hope you'll meet him some

KAISER-Really, doctor, this is strange talk for a sick man-DOCTOR-Not at all. 1 am professionally

interested in these matters. I like to see my patients do themselves justice. I only wish I were socially acquainted with Count Bentinck, so that I might enjoy his unusual resources for mortuary pageantry. That private cemetery of his-well, I envy you. KAISER (sharply) - What for?

DOCTOR-Why, for having so good a his servants! He tells me the footmen have been trained to the pink of perfection Every one of them knows just what to do in an emergency. Everything is ready. The gun carriage, the charger, the reversed riding boots, the dead march on the chapel organ-every formality letter perfect. But perhaps I shouldn't have told you. Perhaps it was to be a surprise ---KAISER-It is!

DOCTOR-The only trouble is, Bentinck | (Doctor exits, Kaiser walks about the says his men are on the verge of being | room in passion and perplexity.)

tear up any scraps of paper. To my amaze- keenness will lose some of its edge. He's ribly altered," eh? Terribly haltered, I ment I heard nothing from him. Finally, having a dress rehearsal this afternoon. KAISER-Good God!

> DOCTOR-Well, I think we had better prepare our daily bulletin. The newspaper men keep coming found to see me.

KAISER-What have you told them? DOCTOR-Exactly what you instructed: that you are terribly altered. That your face is gray and haggard and deeply lined; your nerves shattered; your sleep visited by outrageous dreams; that you are subject to fits of weeping; vitality very low; blood

KAISER (waves him to stop)-Good God! (Goes over and looks at himself in glass.)

DOCTOR-The Associated Press correspondent told me he had an obituary notice all prepared. (Kaiser turns and looks at doctor with horror.) It will be longer and more dramatic than any obituary ever printed. He says he has it all ready for cabling as soon as released. He says it is really something to be proud of. (Kaiser resumes his seat, transfixed with fascinated horror.) He's very anxious that we should tip him off in advance so that he can get a scoop. He wants to know if you would

KAISER-Ach du lieber! (Angrily.) Look here! I want all that stuff contradicted. I won't be made a monkey of this very delicate tribute of friendship to way. Now take this down. (Doctor gets mony. (Stands up stiffly and salutes, then out notebook.)

tle more of your tonic. I feel a bit unstrung. (Doctor stands and salutes. Kaiser braces up.) Very well. Make this announcement: "The Kaiser is feeling exceptionally vigorous. This morning he took the air-A I R-in his whippet tank, and then returned to do a little work on the autobiography, which is practically finished. He feels so much improved that he has dismissed his medical adviser, who exemperor's robust health." Now, doctor, let

cheerful than the thought of enjoying a fortune the most talented undertaker in funeral really commensurate with one's Europe conducts a modest workroom near merits? I assure you that undertaker-KAISER-Silence!

well, that is-would the-would that man | final tribute to his guest, will mark an ap-

DOCTOR-Quite impossible. He keeps them for one particular purpose. He has | that he did not choose to linger in exile or just been getting some of them out of camphor balls, to be ready for anything. I saw them airing this morning.

KAISER-I detest the smell of cam-DOCTOR-Well, your majesty, if you will



KAISER One minute. About that journalist-perhaps in the interests of accuracy I had better-Oh, never mind! Curse it, what a state you have worked me into! genius. I've known him to work over a Who the hell cares what kind of a funeral cadaver for weeks, just to give it the right he gets? The thing is to postpone it as

DOCTOR-On the contrary. There are some conjunctions of circumstances that make it a privilege to hasten nature's

KAISER-Blaufeuer und Schmerz! You DOCTOR-When he has an opportunity to | would not attempt such a thing, I trust? DOCTOR-Oh, nothing unprofessional, of course. But I always hate to see any one overlooking a good opportunity. My, my, how happy I would die if I thought I had a chance for a summa cum laudanum obsequy like the one Graf Bentinck is plan-

KAISER-Well, let him plan for himself. DOCTOR-Oh, it's sheer selfishness on his part. He has a bad heart, you knowmight drop dead any minute. That's why he had this magnificent new tomb builtand twenty pair of coal black horses in the seems almost a pity to see all that pomp wasted on a chap like Bentinck. Of course, he's a nice fellow, but not really a great man. I think it's a bit presumptuous of him to plan a funeral like that. I wish some one would sit in and take it away from him KAISER-The devil you say!

DOCTOR-Well, I must go. Got some visits to make, and I promised the Graf to get back for that dress rehearsal this afternoon. He's a little worried about having the ceremony without an actual cadaver. friend! What pains he has taken to drill I've got to try and find one for him. (Doctor opens door.) KAISER-Look here. Just have that

newspaper man send me his proof to read, DOCTOR-Oh, yes-hum-you know, I thought you might want to see it, so I took the liberty of bringing it along. (Takes roll of galley proofs from his pocket and gives it to the Kaiser.) Goodby, your

overtrained. He fears that if they don't | KAISER-What rot! (Sees rope on bed;

guess they mean. (Flings rope into a corner. Glances at proofs and throws them down.) All lies, I suppose! I'll go on with the autobiography. (Sits down at typewriter.) Hope that capital I is all right. (Tries it tentatively. He works the machine slowly and awkwardly, watching the keyboard intently. Then glances up to see what he has written, reading it aloud.)

"Rarely have I enjoyed anything more than my funeral" - Gott, that fool's chatter about funerals has made me looney. What I meant to write was, "Rarely have I enjoyed anything more than my experience in the front trenches." (Walks over and looks at himself in mirror, salutes his reflection, then puts out his tongue and examines it.)

H'm-a little touch of biliousness. (Tries to smell his own breath by puffing it out and waving it back toward his nose with his hand.) My breath is a bit fishy. I suppose that artistic undertaker wouldn't like that. Curse the undertaker! (Picks up proofs and sits in armchair.) Let's see what this idiot says. (Reads.) "Front page stuff, ten point blackface, two column measure, double leaded. Eight column triple bank head, with three column cut showing Kaiser in full regalia." Hum, that fellow's not such a fool, after all. (Reads.) "The most detested autocrat in human history" -hear, hear! This deserves a little cere-

resumes reading, standing.) "The man KAISER-Just a minute. Give me a lit- whom the conscience of mankind condemns as responsible for the world war died at Amerongen to-day." (He skims through the proofs.) This is really quite gratifying. Hello, here's something added in pencil. Very odd, it looks like Bentinck's writing. (Reads.) "Maximilian Harden said the Kaiser would have been a great showman. He was indeed a consummate master of the spectacular. Throughout his life he held the centre of the stage, and nothing proves his dramatic genius more convincingly than the fact that he chose for his deathplace me hear no more about funerals. I prefer | the picturesque castle at Amerongen, where Count Bentinck has lavished every artifice DOCTOR-Ah, sir, what could be more on his delightful funeral hobby. By good the chateau. The magnificent mortuary chapel where the fallen Lucifer will lie in DOCTOR-As you will, majesty. (About state is a fitting stage for the last pageant of this prince of darkness. The stately fu-KAISER-Just a moment, doctor. Hum- neral ceremonies, devised by the Count as a propriate curtain for this strange career. It was characteristic of the late Emperor wait for a worse fate" (the Kaiser pauses at this)-"but made even Death conform to

his unbending will." (He holds himself erect, rather proudly). Very well put! (Loses composure.) What

damned rot this is! (A knock at door. Kaiser starts, grabs revolver and crouches behind chair. Then he thinks better of it, straightens up, pock-

ets revolver and walks to the door.) KAISER-Who's there? VOICE OUTSIDE-The undertaker, your

VOICE-Graf Bentinck said you wanted to see me, your majesty. KAISER-This is a conspiracy! Kaput! (Hesitates, then opens door.)

KAISER-Good God! Go away!

(Enter undertaker.)

form?

UND .- You wanted to see me, majesty? KAISER-Not at all. Why should I? UND .- Why, about this funeral this afternoon-I mean the dress rehearsal-

KAISER-What has that got to do with UND .- Well, your majesty, Graf Bentinck

thought you might want to appear in uni-KAISER-I don't intend to appear at

UND .- Very good, your majesty. (Starts KAISER-One moment. You said in uni-

UND .- Yes, your majesty, KAISER-What kind of uniform? UND .-- You could have your choice, majesty-Scots Guards, Blue Devils, Death's Head Hussars-

such mummery-UND .-- I'm sorry to have troubled your majesty. If you should ever be in the village I should be happy to have you visit the shop. We have exceptional facilities,

and would be glad to welcome you. Any time at all, at your convenience-KAISER-Preposterous! UND .- If there are any preferences as to shaving, costuming, embalming and so on it would be well to give me a memorandum in advance. Then we would be prepared for any emergency. Graf Bentinck assures

KAISER-Graf Bentinck has taken leave of his senses UND .- I ask pardon, your majesty, for intruding prematurely. A little later, per-

(Goes to door.) KAISER-You say you have a hussar uniform?

UND.-Yes, majesty. I was thinking that if I might take your measurements I could tell whether the uniform would need any alterations.



KAISER-Hum! Well, go ahead!

measures the Kaiser.) KAISER (thoughtfully)-Of course, I'd noon be tickled to death to wear a hussar uni- KAISER-My dear fellow, this will never form again.

UND. (measuring)-It will fit exactly. If your majesty means that literally, you shall have it.

KAISER-You are impertinent. Come, I'll buy that uniform from you. UND .- It is not for sale, majesty. Graf

Bentinck ordered it for a special purpose. KAISER-Bentinck is a vampire. I always did think he was half English. UND .- Yes, sir. The vampire on whom

the sun never sets. (Finishes taking measurements.) There will be no difficulty about the casket, your majesty. KAISER-The casket?

UND .- Yes, sir. Regular stock size. I have a very desirable one reserved on Graf Bentinck's order. Solid ebony, guaranteed worm and vermin proof-KAISER-Schrecklichkeit!

UND .- If not found up to specifications we will gladly exchange it within a year. KAISER (laughs insanely)-Ha! ha! ha! All you need now is some one to fill it, hey? UND .- Satin-lined, quilted with royal purple. You might be interested in our catalogue, your majesty. Order blank inclosed. (Hands him catalogue.)

this. Poor old chap. I had no idea his heart was queer. What a morbid idea to have a dress rehearsal--- Where is he UND .- Out in the hothouses, your majesty, having some wreaths made. I told

KAISER-I must see Bentinck about all

him it was a little early to cut the flowers, they wilt so quickly, but he said it would be all over by 5 o'clock. KAISER--Shades of Attila! Why, he'll hardly be cold enough to bury by then. UND .- Oh, well, I dare say it'll turn out

all right. The doctor promised to find a

KAISER-Yes, but whose? UND .-- I don't know, but he told me it was all fixed up.

remains for us.

KAISER -One of his patients has died, UND. Oh, he's not dead yet-KAISER-That doctor is a ghoul-UND.-But he said he's as good as dead.

of ghastly joke. Of course, you don't really need a-a-remains-for a mere dress re-UND .- Oh, yes-it's very bad luck to have a funeral without burying some one. KAISER-Bad luck for whom? I should

KAISER-Well, well, I suppose it's a kind

say it was good luck for the chap who wasn't buried. UND .- You can't always tell just what is good luck and what isn't.

KAISER-It seems a pity to throw away a pageant like that on some poorhouse UND .- That's just what I told Graf Ben- | the ordinary. tinck, your majesty. That's why I was

KAISER-Hoping what, you rascal? UND .- Well-it is an opportunity, your majesty. Think of all those lovely flowers, so fresh and fragrant. Why, they'll be

faded by to-morrow. KAISER (seizes revolver and threatens undertaker)-Enough of this nonsense. Get out of here, or you'll have that quilted

purple for yourself-UND. (retreating) - And the hussar uniform, your majesty?

KAISER-Get out! When I need you I'll send for you. UND. -Auf wiedersehen, majesty! (Exit.) KAISER (walks uneasily about the room) -Was ever a man so harassed! Sein oder nicht sein, das ist jetzt die Frage! Good old Shakespeare, he was wasted on those bar-

(Undertaker opens door and sticks his



UND .- Pardon, your majesty, I meant to have left this with you. (Hands him sheet of paper.) KAISER-Heraus! UND .- You won't give the job to any of

those Allied undertakers, your majesty? They wouldn't do you justice-(Kaiser seizes pistol again, and undertaker exits rapidly.)

KAISER (looking at paper)-A receipted

bill: "Received from Graf Bentinck payment in full for expense of extraordinary de luxe funeral at Amerongen, including hussar uniform, purple satin pall and services of 100 mutes in sable"- Good heavens, this is beginning to pall on me--- Ha ha! I must include this remarkable document in the autobiography. (Places it among MS, papers.) It begins to look as though I might be able to describe the funeral after all. (Turns over his papers, sets them in order.) Happily I've got everything in pretty good order. (Looks at undertaker's catalogue.) This is a grewsome business. (Reads.) "A KAISER-Nonsense. I am done with good bourgeois funeral, 300 marks." Hum! Funeral such as is acceptable to the nobility, 1,000 marks." "Extra special funeral for high nobility, 2,000 marks." I should think Bentinck would have been content with that. I don't quite like the idea of his having a hussar uniform. It seems rather too much swank for a civilian. (Looks again at receipted bill.) Lord, he has paid 20,000 marks for this mere rehearsal! Upon my (Knock at door.)

KAISER-Herein! (Still absorbed in catalogue.) (Enter Bentinck, carrying funeral wreath.)

BENTINCK-Hullo, I've brought you some

KAISER-Very jolly of you! They may be useful. What's all this I hear about a

BENTINCK-What, has some one been giving away my little secret? KAISER Doesn't seem much secret about it. BENTINCK-Well, Bill, I most told you,

any moment. I thought I owed it to my. (Undertaker takes out tape measure and self to have things rehearsed a bit. I feel rather rotten; it may happen this after.

do. I counted on our spending years together. I wanted to read you the rest of

BENTINCK-I'm sorry, Bill. I don't think I am long for this world. Not as long as that, anyway. To tell you the truth, Pm looking forward to the event with a good deal of pleasure. It'll be quite a sight, I am planning the grandest ceremony that ever happened. The only thing I regret is that I shan't be able to superintend it myself, because, of course, no one else is quite so familiar with all the etiquette-KAISER-Well, now, let's talk this over.

Couldn't you find some one to take your BENTINCK-What, let some one else have that magnificent mausoleum, that lovely hussar uniform? Dear me, no; it's

KAISER-Hum. Did you ever think of making it a double-header? BENTINCK-I couldn't permit such a

KAISER-I haven't been feeling very well myself. You know one ought to think possibilities-BENTINCK-Oh, no, old chap. This is Liberty Hall, of course, but I couldn't think

understand they are making arrangements at Versailles-KAISER-I'm damned if I'll be buried at Versailles. Look here, you won't really need that hussar uniform; suppose you let

of letting you have my funeral. Besides, I

BENTINCK-It wouldn't fit you-KAISER-Oh, yes, it would; the undertaker was up here and measured me.

me have it?

BENTINCK-My dear fellow, you don't understand. This is a funeral uniform. It's no use except in a casket. You see it's only a false front, ties at the back with tapes. Conservation of cloth. It's only meant to be worn at a lying-in-state, where the back isn't visible

KAISER-Never mind; I can keep my back away from people.



disappointing the undertaker. Such a nice fellow, and he has taken a great fancy to KAISER-He has taken a fancy to me too. In fact, he promised the uniform to me if I wanted it. You can get along with

something else. You have uniforms of your

own. I have nothing here except this damned mufti. BENTINCK-No, you must let me have my way. I am a little obstinate about this, The affair is to be something quite out of

KAISER (getting angry) But what right have you to wear a hussar uniform if I want it? I am your superior officer. BENTINCK-Don't make it hard for me.

It is very painful to refuse you anything.

Now sit down and enjoy your flowers, You'll think better of this later on. I hope I'll you at the ceremony. Four o'clock

that uniform BENTINCK-There, there, old chap, let me have my little fling. It will be delight-

what you want; you want me to be buried in civilian clothes. I'll spite you! BENTINCK-You must excuse me, the guard of honor is waiting. I have to give

(Opens door and shouts) Rosner! (Enter Rosner) ROSNER-Zu Befehl, majesty. KAISER-Never mind that letter to Herr

ROSNER-Very good, majesty. KAISER-Now, Rosner, I have heard of a magnificent opportunity to get in on a good thing. To get in on the ground floor, in fact. Kindly obey my instructions to the letter.

ROSNER-Implicitly, sir. KAISER (handing him roll of galley proofs)-Give this to The Associated Press correspondent. Tell him it is released for publication. And here (picks up pile of MS.), take the manuscript and send it to the

once and tell the undertaker to send up that Hussar uniform. KOSNER-Fest darauf, majesty! (Exit).

poison.) Here's to the hussars! (He draws himself up, salutes with superb precision, and drink the poison. Dies with appropriate gesture, utterance and convulsion, according to the taste and in-

Countess Bentinck, chuckling.) BENTINCK-I thought the uniform stunt

ceremony! Overtaken by the undertaker. (Goes to door and calls to undertaker,

COUNTESS-You mean he was. [CURTAIN.]

author.)

KAISER-I insist on your letting me have KAISER-Curse your obstinacy! I know

them some final instructions. Now don't miss the event, it'll be worth seeing. (Exit.) KAISER (fuming) - Hartnäckiger Schwein! What kind of a host is that!

Wilson. I'm not going to send it.

publishers. ROSNER-Yes, majesty. KAISER-Telephone to the village at

KAISER (wildly)-I'll fool Bentinck! The selfish old ape! (Paces madly about the room. His eye falls on the tumbler of

clination of the actor.) (After the audience has thorough grasped the fact that the Kaiser is design the door opens, and enter Bentinck and

would do the trick-COUNTESS-Great work! I'll have to 'phone the butcher. BENTINCK-Well, now for the great

(Returns to centre of stage and looss down at the corpse, rubbing his hands with Honestly, I'm tickled to death-

outside) Hi, embalmer! Bring on the

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but my heart's dicky. I might wop off at